



Moving On Up With MEPD

February 2009

WELCOME TO “Moving on Up with MEPD”

MEPD (Medicaid for Employed People with Disabilities) allows you to earn money for work and maintain your savings in the bank, which would normally put you over the limit to receive Medicaid. This newsletter is sent to all MEPD Medicaid members.

You get **Medicaid for Employed People with Disabilities (MEPD)** because you:

- Have a disability
- Are earning money from work
- Are under 65 years old

Remember, these things you need to tell your county worker:

- When you stop working.
- When you earn more money.
- When you earn less money.
- When you move to a new address.

We Have a Few 2009 Work Incentive Calendars Left ...

Iowa's 2009 Work Incentive of the Month wall calendar highlights 12 Social Security Work Incentives or other community supports available to Iowans who want to work, but who fear that earning wages will bring about the loss of Medicaid healthcare and Social Security cash benefits.

Each month the 2009 Work Incentive of the Month wall calendar showcases a Social Security Work Incentive or community program that supports working Iowans with disabilities such as MEPD, Impairment Related Work Expense, Ticket-to-Work, etc.

Artwork for the calendar features VSA/Iowa affiliated artists. Thirteen working artists with disabilities are featured in all. In addition, contact information is provided for local and national resources and services that support working people with disabilities.

Each month has space to document earnings and deductible expenses related to work and disability – and to document the reporting of that information to Social Security. In Iowa, there has been at least one instance of Social Security forgiving overpayment status because of the use of a similar tracking and reporting system.

The 2009 Benefits Planner calendar was created in a smaller version and includes pouches for people to store pay stubs, receipts, and other important information. It was designed for Social Security recipients who are working or who anticipate working soon.

Supplies are limited, but if you would like a calendar mailed to you, please email srenner@dhs.state.ia.us. Be sure to include your complete mailing information and specify which version of the calendar you would like.



EVENTS CALENDAR

Work Incentive Seminar Events (WISE)

For People with Disabilities Who Want to Become Employed

Each month Iowa's Medicaid Infrastructure Grant, with assistance from the Social Security Administration, Iowa's Work Incentive Planning & Assistance project, and Iowa's Disability Program Navigators sponsor workshops related to work and community living options for people with disabilities at different locations throughout the state.

Work Incentive Planning & Assistance staff present information about Social Security Work Incentives and other community supports available to working Iowans with disabilities. Home and Community Based Services (HCBS) staff discuss how Iowa's HCBS Waivers can assist people with disabilities both with work and community living.

Information is also offered about Iowa's newest program -- Community Choices Options, which allows people with disabilities to self-direct their own services.

Participation is free and voluntary and people are encouraged to attend all or part of the workshop. Mileage and personal assistance services can be reimbursed.

The following **Work Incentive Seminar Events** are scheduled for 2009:

March 12	Oskaloosa William Penn University
April 9	Sioux City
May 7	Fort Madison
June 11	Decorah Good Shepherd Lutheran Church
July 9	Clinton
August 13	Sheldon
September 10	Ames Gateway Hotel & Conference Center
October 8	Cedar Rapids Iowa Workforce Development
November 12	Harlan/Therkildsen Activity
December 10	Mason City NIACC Muse-Norris Building

For more information go to <http://www.ime.state.ia.us/HCBS/MemberEvents.html> or call 1-888-409-0283.

Self-Employment: People Who Own Themselves

This popular two-day workshop combines the principles of business ownership with information about how income generated from self-employment can impact Social Security and other public assistance benefits.

Participants learn the basics of small business development such as how to conduct a business feasibility study and how to create a financial plan, business plan and marketing plan. In addition a variety of state and federal programs and services are highlighted that support self-employment for people with disabilities. Participants learn the very unique ways that Social Security Work Incentives can be used to launch their business start-up efforts.

Successful entrepreneurs with disabilities are used to illustrate how success begins with person-centered planning. Business owners and business models are unique and call for a uniquely crafted implementation plan, using a network of supportive people and resources.

Molly Sullivan, an Associate with Griffin-Hammis Associates, conducts Iowa's Self-Employment workshops. Griffin-Hammis are national experts on self-employment for people with disabilities.

Self-Employment workshop participants are invited to sign up for individual brainstorming sessions with Molly Sullivan and staff from Iowa's Work Incentives Planning and Assistance program. Participants receive feedback about their business start-up idea, information about the potential impact that earned income may have on their benefits, and suggestions about helpful resources.

Registration is free, although space is limited to the **first 25 people who register** -- so register early. Lunch is provided; mileage and personal assistance services can be reimbursed. To register, call toll-free **888-409-0283**.

The following **Self-Employment** workshops are scheduled for 2009:

April 13 & 14	Mason City/Holiday Inn
April 16 & 17	Des Moines/Quality Inn and Suites
June 8 & 9	Oelwein/Northeast Iowa Community College
June 11 & 12	Mount Pleasant
August 3 & 4	Ottumwa/Hotel Ottumwa
August 6 & 7	Marshalltown Iowa Workforce Center
September 21 & 22	Spencer
September 24 & 25	Council Bluffs/MICAH House

For more information go to <http://www.ime.state.ia.us/HCBS/MemberEvents.html> or call 1-888-409-0283.

State Agencies are Recognized as an Employment Network

The Iowa State Workforce Partners are operating as an approved Employment Network under the federal Social Security Administration Ticket to Work program. Numerous work incentives are offered by the Social Security Administration, one which is the Ticket Program, an employment program available to most Social Security beneficiaries with a disability between the ages of 18-65.

Social Security recognizes some people who receive Social Security benefits due to a disability may want to obtain employment but they have many questions as to how this would impact their benefits and health insurance. The goal of the Ticket Program is to increase choices for Social Security disability beneficiaries to obtain employment, vocational rehabilitation, and other services. People who receive Social Security Disability or SSI are encouraged to learn about the current work incentives to help them make an informed decision about working.

The Iowa State Workforce Partners, is a seven state agency partnership that includes the following agencies: Iowa Workforce Development, Iowa Department for the Blind, Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services, Iowa Department of Education, Iowa Department of Human Rights – Division of Persons with Disabilities, Iowa Governor's Council on Developmental Disabilities, and the Iowa Department of Human Services. This partnership is a coordinated effort enhancing employment opportunities to job seekers who have a disability. As an employment network, this partnership will support local Workforce Center Systems in their efforts to include Social Security beneficiaries in their workforce. Iowa has approximately 88,000 citizens who are eligible for

a ticket through this work incentive. Social Security disability beneficiaries may contact this approved Employment Network, by contacting their local Iowa Workforce Development office, which works closely with all workforce systems in Iowa, as well as the many other "Employment Networks" located and operating in the State of Iowa. These employment networks will assist the job seeker in connecting with the available services that will support the beneficiary in reaching his or her employment goal.



For ticket-holders interested in learning more about the Ticket Program and the services offered through the Iowa State Workforce Partners Employment Network, they can contact Mary Lynn ReVoir, State Lead Disability Program Navigator at 1-866-520-8986 ext 107 (for deaf or hard of hearing please use Relay 711) or email to mary.revoir@iwd.iowa.gov.

Iowa COMPASS

Iowa's Disability Information Experts
"We'll point you in the right direction!"

Iowa COMPASS has been serving Iowans with disabilities, their families and service providers since 1986. You can reach us by the toll-free number Monday through Friday 8am – 5pm. Or you can reach us using email. An AIRS certified information specialist will help you identify your needs and refer you to local, state and national programs.

We offer free...

- **Information Searches**
We provide information about and referrals to disability related programs and services.
- **Product Searches**
We have information about assistive devices that help individuals with disabilities be more independent. Tell us what you need; we find the product!
- **Funding Searches**
We can identify potential funding sources for home or vehicle modifications, adapted equipment, and assistive devices.
- **Used Equipment Referral Service**
We connect buyers and sellers of used assistive devices.
- **Legal Advocacy for Assistive Devices**
We help resolve funding questions and we provide legal advocacy services for problems acquiring assistive devices.

Ask us about our newsletter!

Contact Us: Monday-Friday, 8am-5pm
1-800-779-2001 Voice 1-877-686-0032 TTY
www.iowacompass.org iowa-compass@uiowa.edu

Claim your Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC)

The EITC is a **refundable** Federal and State income tax credit for low-income working individuals and families. A "**refundable**" credit means you get the money even if it is more than the tax you owe and even if you owe no tax at all!

- You may even be able to claim the EITC from the last two years.
- For further information, or to find a **free tax preparation** site near you, call the IRS at 1-800-829-1040 or to find an AARP site near you, check their website at www.aarp.org, and type *tax help* in the search box.
- Records show as many as 20% of Iowans fail to claim this tax credit, don't you be one of them!

P.S. The EITC does not impact your benefits for at least two months. After that you need to check with your IM worker.

What's New with the MEPD Advisory Committee?

MEPD Advisory Committee "Working together so all can work"

Employment First Initiative – The MEPD Advisory Committee was joined by Iowa's Association of Persons in Supported Employment (APSE) and others to plan an "Employment First" initiative in Iowa. Employment First is a vision of EMPLOYMENT as the **FIRST** consideration for people with disabilities (including people with significant disabilities) and EMPLOYMENT is the preferred outcome for all working age Iowans with disabilities.

In most cases, employment is defined as work in an integrated, community setting; providing an opportunity to earn competitive wages and benefits commensurate with the responsibilities of the job.

Thirteen states have initiated Employment First activities with varying policy infrastructure action plans. Employment First activities range from state to state. For example, Oregon created a comprehensive employment Internet web hub providing information and resource tools to people with disabilities, mental health issues, seniors, transition-age youth, and employers. California evaluated the economic impact of eliminating special minimum wages and special minimum wage certificates. And Tennessee reevaluated reimbursement rates paid to day service providers, establishing a higher reimbursement rate for integrated community employment than for any other type of service provision.

Membership Master List

Sherry Becker
Mason City

Dustin Bushnell
Des Moines

Raymond Gerke
Woodward

Larry and Lorraine Hoffman
Clear Lake

Jack Holveck
Des Moines

Dave Lenz
Des Moines

Brooke Lovelace
Des Moines

Melissa Nation
Council Bluffs

Linda Hildebrand
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People with disabilities,
advocates, policy administrators,
employers, and medical
professionals working together to
enhance opportunities for Iowans
with disabilities to work and live
as they choose.